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READING LEAFLETS, FRANCIS PARKER SCHOOL
PART I

THE HARVEST—*continued*

JENNIE HALL

MY MOTHER'S STORIES

II. A HUSKING BEE

Sometimes the plowing and other work lasted long.

The corn-husking had to wait.

At last it was too cold for husking out-of-doors.

Then the men hauled the bundles of corn to the barn.

They threw them upon the floor.

One of the boys rode to the neighbors' houses.

"Come over to our house tomorrow night," he said, "we are going to have a husking-bee."

At each house he borrowed a lantern.

The next evening we lighted all the lanterns.

We hung them in the big barn.

The floor was covered with cornstalks.

Soon the neighbors began to come.

We took them to the barn.

We all sat down on the corn.

Then we all began to husk.

It was great fun.

We told jokes.

We laughed and sang songs.

The corn leaves rustled.
The corn ears went thump on the floor.
Soon all the corn was husked.
Then we pushed the stalks into a corner.
We swept the floor.
Mother and the boys went to the house.
Soon they came back.
They carried big pans of doughnuts and pots of
hot coffee and pitchers of cider.
We all sat down on the floor and ate and drank
and talked and laughed.
At last a fiddle squeaked.
We all shouted and jumped up.
The music began.
We danced and danced.
That was a husking-bee.

THE BARLEY MOWERS' SONG

Barley Mowers, here we stand
One, two, three, a steady band;
True of heart and strong of limb,
Ready in our harvest trim:
All a-row with spirits blithe;
Now we whet the bended scythe;
Rink-a-tink, rink-a-tink, rink-a-tink-a-tink.

Side by side, now bending low,
Down the swaths of barley go,
Stroke by stroke, as true as chime

Of the bells, we keep in time;
Then we whet the ringing scythe,
Standing 'mid the barley lithe.
Rink-a-tink, rink-a-tink, rink-a-tink-a-tink.

MARY HOWITT

INDIAN RICE HARVEST

Rice grows wild in many places.
It must have much water.
It grows in swamps and in the edges of little lakes.
Sometimes it grows in the edges of slow rivers.
The tall stalks stand up out of the water.
They are green.
The tops are feathery.
Here grow the seeds.
They are heavy and they make the heads bend
down.
When the rice is ripe the stalks and leaves turn
yellow.
Then the Indian women gather it.
They lay mats in the bottom of their canoes.
Upon them they set large baskets.
They push the canoes into the water.
They paddle to the rice patches.
They push their canoes among the rice patches.
They bend the stalks over their canoes.
They hit the heads with sticks.
The ripe rice falls out into the canoes.
Soon the mats on the bottom of the canoes are
covered with rice.

The women pour it into their baskets.
Then they gather more.
Long ago wild rice grew in the edges of the
Chicago River.
Indians lived here then.
Indian women gathered the rice.

IN THE MOONLIGHT

The farmer's family were eating supper.
"There is a good moon tonight," the farmer said,
"Shall we shock the wheat?"
"Yes," said the boys.
So after supper they went to the field.
The stubble cracked under their feet.
The moon made black shadows.
The bundles of wheat lay on the ground.
"Joe, you go down the north side," the farmer said,
"George, you go down the south side.
I will take the middle."
Then the work began.
Each man bent down, picked up a bundle, set it
up on end, bent down for another.
His shadow bent with him.
Field mice ran from the bundles.
The stubble cracked.
One shock was done, another, another.
Soon there were three long lines of shocks.
A shadow lay behind every shock.
A little breeze blew.
"It is cool working at night," said Joe.

THRESHING IN ITALY

The threshing-floor is out of doors.
It is a flat place paved with stones.
The floor is covered with yellow corn.
The men are going to shell it today.
Four of them come with their flails.
The flail is made of two sticks of wood.
They are tied loosely together at one end.
Two men stand on each side of the threshing-floor.
They swing their flails over their shoulders.
Down they come on the corn—first this two and
then that two.
Whack! Whack! sound the flails.
The yellow corn flies.
The white cobs peep out.
After a long time the men stop.
They take wooden forks.
They lift the corn and cobs.
The corn falls through the forks.
The cobs stay on.
The men throw them away into a pile.
But some cobs still have corn on them.
The men take up their flails again.
So they work until all the corn is off.
It lies in a clean, yellow pile.
On another day the men thresh wheat in the same
way.

THRESHING IN GREECE

It looks like a circus.
There are two or three threshing floors in a field.

One is covered with bundles of wheat.
 A man is driving four horses around over the
 field.
 The horses are dragging a little board.
 The man stands on this board.
 He cracks his whip.
 The horses run around and around over the wheat.
 The straw cracks under their feet.
 The wheat falls out of the heads.
 At another floor the threshing is done.
 The horses have been driven off.
 The straw is all broken up.
 The wheat is beaten out of the heads.
 It lies on the floor under the straw.
 Men are winnowing it now.
 They stand so that the wind blows from behind
 them.
 They take wooden forks.
 They toss the straw and wheat into the air.
 The wheat falls again.
 But the wind blows the chaff and straw away.
 The men keep tossing it for a long time, until the
 wheat is clean.
 At the other threshing-floor women are at work.
 The clean wheat is raked into a pile.
 The women lay blankets on the floor.
 They spread wheat on the blankets.
 They look it over and pick out the sticks or straws
 or stones.
 Then they put it into bags and tie it up.

The bags are striped brown and white or red and black or yellow and brown.

So at the three floors many things are going on at once.

Here men are driving their horses around and around.

There men are tossing the wheat and the chaff is blowing away.

Here women are filling gay bags.